

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-21, 29-31, 37-43 and 45 have been canceled without prejudice in the present or previous responses. In the present response, claims 22 and 46 have been amended, and claim 78 has been added. It is believed that new independent claim 78 reads on the elected species. In view of the previously issued restriction requirement, claims 24-28, 34 and 73-77 have been withdrawn from consideration. It is believed that the respective independent claims from which the withdrawn dependent claims depend are generic. As a result from the above discussed amendments, claims 5, 22-28, 32-36, 44, and 46-78 are currently pending, and claims 5, 22, 23, 32, 33, 35, 36, 44, 46-72 and 78 are currently under consideration.

The applicants first wish to thank the Examiner for allowing independent claims 5, 32 and 44 as well as their selected dependent claims. On page 5 of the Office Action, it was indicated that dependent claims 45, 46 and 48 contained allowable subject matter. In this regard, the features of dependent claim 45 have been incorporated into independent claim 22, and dependent claim 45 has been canceled. Dependent claim 46 has been amended so as to now depend upon claim 22. Further, dependent claim 48 has been rewritten into independent form as new independent claim 78. As a result of the above amendments, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance.

As a housekeeping matter, it should be noted that, although pages 1-4 of the PTO-1449 forms from the February 20, 2004 Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) were initialed and returned, the Applicants' undersigned representative did not receive a copy of the initialed PTO-1449 page 5 from the February 20th IDS. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of PTO-1449 page 5 from the February 20th IDS has been enclosed with this response. If for some reason the Examiner can not locate copies of the references that were previously submitted with this IDS, the Examiner is

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invited to contact the undersigned by telephone so that copies of these references can be quickly supplied.

Also, it should be noted that another IDS has been submitted at the same time of this response along with copies of the cited references. Although the present response was sent by fax, the IDS was sent via mail due to the size of the cited references. The Applicants kindly request that the Examiner returns an initialcd copy of the IDS form with the next communication from the Patent Office.

It should be understood that the above remarks are not intended to provide an exhaustive basis for patentability or concede the basis for the rejections in the Office Action, but are simply provided to overcome the rejections made in the Office Action in the most expedient fashion.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicant's undersigned representative.

Respectfully Submitted,

By 

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